



# *MFC News*

*Caring for the Trees and Forests of Mississippi Since 1926*

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*February 2014*



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# *Happy Valentine's Day*



The Mississippi Forestry Commission provides equal employment opportunities and services to all individuals regardless of disability, race, age, religion, color, gender, national origin, or political affiliation.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

## Fun Facts

- ♥ More than 36 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolate is sold each year.
- ♥ On average, men shell out \$130 each on candy, cards, jewelry, flower and dates.
- ♥ About 8 billion candy hearts will be produced this year, that's enough candy to stretch from Rome, Italy to Valentine, Arizona 20 times and back again.
- ♥ Worldwide, over 50 million roses are given for Valentine's Day each year.
- ♥ Women purchase 85% of all valentines.
- ♥ In order of popularity, Valentine's Day cards are given to teachers, children, mothers, wives, sweethearts and pets.
- ♥ 73% of people who buy flowers for Valentine's Day are men.
- ♥ The oldest known Valentine's Day Card is on display at the British Museum in London. It's dates back to the 1400's.

### Newsletter Deadlines

All submissions are welcome. Photographs are encouraged (although space limitations may curtail inclusion). Items must be received by the **10<sup>th</sup> of the month** to be included in the next month's issue. E-mail submissions (in *Microsoft Word*) and photos to

[lharris@mfc.state.ms.us](mailto:lharris@mfc.state.ms.us)

or mail to:

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Raleigh, MS 39153

## The Colors of Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is known around the world as an opportunity to celebrate love. Red, pink or white roses and humorous or sentimental cards are the typical gifts exchanged. In America, jewelry has also become a popular love token. However, almost any present wrapped in Valentine colors is acceptable.

Red roses symbolize energy, passion and deep love. Traditionally, they are reserved for intimate, romantic relationships. From earliest times, a red rose has been valued for its fragrance and beauty. Giving this lovely crimson creation to a friend for Valentine's Day could send the wrong message and create an awkward situation.

Pink roses might be a better choice for a friend or family member. This color speaks of affection, sweetness and understanding. Since pink is actually created by combining red and white, some consider pink to be the representation of innocence and virginity. Light pink can represent grace, gentility, admiration and friendship. Dark pink, on the other hand, leans more toward gratitude, appreciation and thankfulness. White roses symbolize spiritual love, purity, reverence and humility. They can also connote faithfulness, a valuable component in any love relationship.

The tradition of celebrating Valentine's Day has many legends. A common one is the

story of the priest, St. Valentine, who was martyred in the third century for marrying young couples against the emperor's decree. While traditions and stories have changed throughout the years, the primary colors for flowers or gift wrappings and cards have remained the same.

However, since rose colors each have their own messages, many gift-givers prefer to offer a shade that is especially significant to the relationship or one that is a favorite choice of the recipient. The following colors can still be meaningful Valentine gifts:

- Purple, lavender—This color is an announcement that the giver has fallen in love with the recipient at first sight. It also symbolizes enchantment and originality.
- Coral—The color of desire.
- Orange, apricot—The colors of enthusiasm and fascination.
- Yellow—Presents a "Welcome Back" sentiment—as in "Tie a Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Old Oak Tree." Yellow also speaks of gladness, joy and friendship.
- Peach—Sympathy, sincerity, gratitude and modesty are all represented by this multipurpose color.

- Red and white speak of unity.
- Yellow and orange reflect thoughts of passion.
- Red and yellow are celebratory colors that offer congratulations.

"Blue" and "black" roses do not really exist in the natural world, and they are not the best choices for this holiday. Blue roses represent the unattainable or impossibility of a situation. Dark red, or black, roses can symbolize rebirth and new life, but they are more often associated with death and saying farewell.

Valentine's Day is a wonderful occasion to remember your loved ones with flowers and cards. It is also one of the most difficult days of the year for those who are feeling unnoticed and alone. Consider reaching out to someone who might be dreading the very same day you are anticipating. There are certainly enough rose colors to pick from to communicate an important message—that you care.



Specific color combinations can also carry an important message:

## The History Of Valentine's Day

Every February 14, across the United States and in other places around the world, candy, flowers and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine. But who is this mysterious saint, and where did these traditions come from? Find out about the history of this centuries-old holiday, from ancient Roman rituals to the customs of Victorian England.

### The Legend of St. Valentine

The history of Valentine's Day—and the story of its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. But who was Saint Valentine, and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

Other stories suggest that

Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and—most importantly—romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, perhaps thanks to this reputation, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France.

**Origins of Valentine's Day:** A Pagan Festival in February While some believe that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death or burial—which probably occurred around A.D. 270—others claim that the Christian church may have decided to place St. Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to "Christianize" the pagan celebration of Lupercalia. Celebrated at the ides of February, or February 15, Lupercalia was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the Roman founders Romulus and Remus.

To begin the festival, members of the Luperci, an order of Roman priests, would gather at a sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, were believed to have been cared for by a she-wolf or lupa. The priests would sacrifice a goat, for fertility, and a dog, for purification. They would then strip the goat's hide into strips, dip them into the sacrificial blood and take to the streets, gently slapping both women and crop fields with the goat hide. Far from being fearful, Roman women welcomed the touch of the hides because it was believed to make them more fertile in the coming year. Later in the day, according to legend, all the young women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would each choose a name and become paired for the year with his chosen woman. These matches often ended in marriage.

### Valentine's Day: A Day of Romance

Lupercalia survived the initial rise of Christianity and but was outlawed—as it was deemed "un-Christian"—at the end of the 5th century, when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day. It was not until much later, however, that the day became definitively associated with love. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of Valentine's Day should be a

## February's Birthdays



Sharon McMorris -1  
Edward Deaton -2  
Willis Goodnight -2  
Christopher Burnham -5  
Clayton Henderson -5  
Zachary Stewart -6  
Ella McGowan -7  
William Shaw -10  
Vicky Stegall -10  
Austin Bailey -11  
Trent Griffin -11  
George Pitts -13  
Gordon Jones -14  
Jennifer Leblanc -15  
James Bond -18  
Angela Brown -18  
Patricia Moak -18  
Michael Bell -19  
Thomas Walker -19  
Michael Crabb -20  
William Lofton -20  
Bradley Pigg -20  
Virginia Hair -21  
George Knight -21  
Benton Vanderford -21  
Cecil Brewer -22  
Andrea Curry -22  
Steven Ramage -22  
Wallace Downs -24  
John Martin -24  
Louis Ray -24  
William Duncan -25  
Brittney Ladner -25  
Larry Nunley -26  
Brad Anderson -27  
Justin Dewberry -27





SAY HELLO TO OUR

## NEW HIRES

- ☺ Robin Lackey, Accounting & Finance Director, State Office.
- ☺ David McCain, Forest Ranger, Marion County, Southwest District
- ☺ Samantha Bona, Forest Ranger, Franklin County, Southwest District
- ☺ James Stephens, Forest Ranger, Jeff Davis County, Southwest District
- ☺ Benjamin Matthews, Forest Ranger, Smith County, South Central District

## Retirement NEXT EXIT ➔

- \* Bobby Stevens, Forest Ranger, Alcorn County, NED
- \* Jimmy Fulton, Forest Ranger, Monroe County, NED
- \* James Thornton, Equipment Repair Supervisor, Lee County, NED
- Wallace Downs, Equipment Repair Supervisor, Grenada County, NWD
- Ruth Dollar, Administrative Assistant, Stone County, SED



### Leaves:

Arrangement: simple; alternate; tardily deciduous or semi-evergreen  
Size: 1.5" - 2.5" long  
Margin: coarsely toothed near apex; some leaves entire  
Apex: acute  
Base: cuneate  
Shape: obovate  
Color: green above; paler below  
Surface: shiny above; sticky below  
Venation: pinnate

### Twigs:

Size: slender  
Color: green  
Surface: angled; often sticky

### Buds:

Size: minute  
Shape: nearly globose  
Color: green  
Surface: solitary; sessile; 4 exposed scales - all but outermost encased in hardened greenish resin

### Fruit and Flowers:

Achene: single seeded; feathery  
Size: < 0.5" long  
Shape: globular-oval (similar to dandelion)  
Color: white  
Flower: dioecious; in terminal, branched clusters (appear as feathery white tufts); 0.25" - 0.5" long; white; conspicuous

**Bark:** orangish brown young; gray with flat ridges and

## Tree Knowledge - Who Am I?

orangish shallow furrows mature

### Physical Attributes:

Form: multiple stem  
Size: 10.0', mature  
Growth Rate: moderate;  
10.0' maximum @ 20 years — rapid early; 3.0' @ 2-3 yrs  
Life Span: moderate (>50 yrs)

### Tolerances:

Shade: intermediate  
Drought: low  
Fire: medium  
Anaerobic: high  
Propagation: seed (no cold stratification required); bare root; container

### Habitat and Ecology:

Site: occurs naturally in the upper fringes of irregularly flooded tidal fresh and brackish marshes, back dunes, and inland open woods, vacant fields, and desert habitats  
Soil Texture: fine - coarse  
Soil pH: 5.5 - 7.8  
Range: eastern and southern coastal states from Massachusetts to Florida and west to Texas, plus the northern adjacent states of Arkansas and Oklahoma. In Mississippi, reported throughout except the Mississippi River Delta and some of the northernmost counties.

### Wildlife Value and Uses:

Little or no value as a good food source for game animals; provides cover and nesting habitat for various species of birds; bees and small butterflies feed on nectar from the male flowers; songbirds attracted by the insects; marsh wrens and other small birds frequently nest in the openly

branched, brittle stems

**Timber Value and Uses:**  
None.

### Landscaping Info:

Female plants are particularly attractive in flower; make a good landscape plant in exposed coastal conditions; highly resistant to salt spray and flooding; most commonly installed as 1 to 2 year-old containerized material

### Other Facts:

Being investigated as soil bio-engineering systems for tidal shoreline stabilization; conversely the ability to grow in dense clusters reaching over 3 feet in height within 2 to 3 years also makes it a potential invasive "pest" species

**Warning: The leaves of this plant are poisonous to livestock; the toxic compound in groundsel-bush attacks the hepatic and circulatory system.**

Who Am I?



**Tree Knowledge - Who Am I? for January 2014 was the Nutmeg Hickory .**

**Check out page 53 in the Mississippi Trees book.**

## Mississippi Forestry Economics

Dr. James Henderson and Dr. Ian Munn of MSU have recently published forestry economic impact information sheets by Congressional districts.

These publications can be found at [www.msucare.com](http://www.msucare.com) under

"publications - information sheets", or by clicking each link beside the respective district.

District 1: click [here](#)

District 2: click [here](#)

District 3: click [here](#)

District 4: click [here](#)

Please contact [Dr. James Henderson](#) with any questions.

## Registration Open For Teachers Conservation Workshop



Jeff Ware, Mississippi Forestry Commission, and James Willingham, Hankins, Inc., display the sponsor banner at the 2013 TCW North Workshop.

MFA is now accepting registrations for the 2014 Teachers Conservation Workshops set for Jones County Junior College, June 8 - 13, and Northeast Mississippi Community College, June 22 - 27. This year will be the 51st year for these MFA-sponsored workshops. During the week educators are exposed to classroom instruction and activities, new educational materials, and numerous field trips including industries, harvesting operations, management practices, and nature trails. Participants learn by demonstration and practical exercises how relevant conservation practices can be integrated into classroom work and student projects. Participants also become certified in Project Learning Tree.

Please return [registration form](#) and fee to MFA, 620 N. State Street, Suite 201, Jackson, MS 39202. Questions? Email [epope@msforestry.net](mailto:epope@msforestry.net).

# Tax Tip!

Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2013 Tax Year is now available at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/tax.shtml>.



- Jeffrey Seymour, Forest Ranger, Stone County, Southeast District
- Ross Wescovich, Forest Ranger, Southeast District
- Colin Ladner, Forest Ranger, Southeast District
- Christopher Sachs, Forest Ranger, Southeast District
- John Henderson, Forester Trainee, Southeast District
- Jaret Prestage, Forestry Technician, Yalobusha County, NWD



## Holiday

Holiday Schedule for George Washington's Birthday



Third Monday in February

# CFA Leadership Workshop

County Forestry Association Officers and Directors, MSU Extension Service personnel and MFC personnel who work with the CFAs, are encouraged to attend the annual leadership meetings set for February. Please make reservations by calling MFA at 601-354-4936 or email [epope@msforestry.net](mailto:epope@msforestry.net). A light meal is served at each session.

Dr. Jason Gordon, chair of the CFA state-wide Committee announces the dates and locations as follows:

- ♥ 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2014.  
Meeting location: Forrest County Extension Office, adjacent to Forrest County Multi-purpose Center, Hattiesburg. Directions: Off Highway 49 on Sullivan Road, Approximately 1/2 mile north of intersection of Highway 49 and Hwy. 98 in city

limits of Hattiesburg

- ♥ 5:00 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 6, 2014.  
Meeting location: Neshoba County Coliseum, Philadelphia, Multi-purpose room. Directions: 12000 Highway 15 North, Philadelphia, MS.
- ♥ 5:00 p.m. Monday, February 10, 2014. Meeting location: Northeast Miss. Research and Extension Center, Verona. Directions: Northeast Mississippi Research and Extension Center, 5421 Hwy. 145 South, Verona. From Tupelo, take Highway 45 south to the Brewer Road exit, go west on Brewer Road to Highway 145 about 1 mile. Go north on Highway 145 about 1 mile. The district office is on the left next to the Lee County Agri-Center.

- ♥ 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2014.  
Meeting location: MSU Extension Office, Grenada. Directions: Take the Grenada Exit on I-55 and travel East on Highway 8. Take a left at the first stoplight past the Highway 8 & 51 intersection. There will be a Cross Country Seeds store on the left. Go one block and the Grenada County Extension Building is on the right. It takes up the entire second block.
- ♥ 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2014.  
Meeting location: Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, Jackson, Conference room. Directions: Turn north at the traffic light at High and Monroe Streets. (Opposite Coliseum) Building is on the left. 680 Monroe Street.

*"FOR IT WAS NOT INTO MY EAR YOU WHISPERED, BUT INTO MY HEART. IT WAS NOT MY LIPS YOU KISSED, BUT MY SOUL." JUDY GARLAND*



## Mississippi Firewise

**Firewise Workshop** - Firewise workshops are FREE events, however, pre-registration is required. Meals, refreshments and workshop materials will be provided. Firewise workshop and/or field days are a one-day event, bringing together citizens, business, and community leaders involved in planning, financing, building, sustaining, and protecting communities in the wildland//urban interface. This will be a learning experience and participants will learn about why homes burn, various wildland fuel reduction techniques, and how to assess the fire danger of their own home. *For a listing of CFE/CEU/CLE, [click here](#).*

- ♥ Copeiah County - The Mississippi Forestry Commission and Wesson Garden Club are sponsoring a How To Have A Firewise Home event on February 25, 2014 at the Old Wesson School, 1047 8th Street, Wesson, MS. Contact Lisa Smith at (601) 833-9628 for more information. [Click here](#) for a introduction letter, program agenda and pre-reregistration letter. Please complete the pre-registration form and return by fax to (601) 833-9628 or mail to Lisa Smith, 1098 Old Red Star Road, Wesson, MS 39191 by February 18, 2014.
- ♥ March 13, 2014 at the Maynor Creek Loge, Maynor Creek Water Park in Waynesboro, MS. Contact Lenora Haynes at (601) 307-6728 for more information. [Click here](#) for a introduction letter, program agenda and pre-reregistration letter.



# Having Fun!!!



Smokey attends the Mississippi RiverKings game and drops the first puck. Smokey scores another goal for Fire Prevention.



## Tree Farm Winners for 2013

Mississippi Forestry Association held their annual meeting in October 2013 and announced the winners of the Mississippi Tree Farm program.

### District Tree Farm Inspector of the Year:

Northwest - Russell Fletcher  
 East Central - Brad Joiner  
 Capital - Danny Knight  
 South Central - Tim Deen  
 Southeast - James Shumpert  
 Southwest - Make Dale  
 Northeast - Justin Dewberry.

### What is the Outstanding Inspector of the Year?

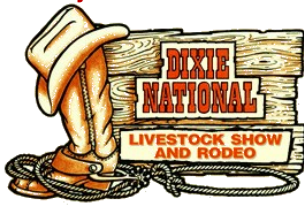
The Outstanding Inspector of the Year award honors an ATFS Volunteer Inspector. These individuals give their time to ATFS, as well as all of our volunteers, and perform considerable outreach efforts to educate the public

and private landowners on the benefits of sustainable forestry.

### Could the next Outstanding Inspector of the Year be from Mississippi?

Congratulations to Justin Dewberry who was the state Tree Farm Inspector of the Year for the past two years. This year he was chosen as the Regional Inspector of the Year from the ATFS National Office. Stay tuned to see if he won at the National level.





♥ **2013 Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo.** This year's Dixie National Livestock Show and Rodeo will run from January 30 thru February 18, 2014.

♥ **Arbor Day At Museum -**

February 14, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. This year's theme is "Love Trees".

♥ **MS Tree Planting Week** - February 14 to 20, 2014.

♥ **2014 Saving Rural American & Youth Conference**

- 7th Annual Saving Rural American and Youth Conference. Sponsored by the Winston County Self Help Co-operative. Friday, January 24, 2014 at the Louisville Coliseum. For more information contact Maria Triplett at [winstoncshc@gmail.com](mailto:winstoncshc@gmail.com).
- Mid-South Progress Agriculture Groups 1st Saving Rural American Conference. Saturday, February 1st 2014 at the David L. Beckley Center, Holly Springs, MS. Contact Revelyn Coleman at [rqpcoleman@yahoo.com](mailto:rqpcoleman@yahoo.com) for more information.
- Jasper County's 1st Saving Rural American Conference. Saturday February 8, 2014 at the Paulding Fire Department, Paulding, MS. Contact Allen McReynolds at [allen.mcreynolds@att.net](mailto:allen.mcreynolds@att.net) for more information.
- Covington County Self Help Groups 3rd Saving Rural American Conference. Saturday, February 15, 2014 at Multi-purpose Building in Collins, MS. Contact Fenton Pope at [fentonpope@yahoo.com](mailto:fentonpope@yahoo.com) for more information.

♥ **Mississippi Sportsmen's Show.** March 7 - 9, 2014 at the Forrest County Multi-purpose Center in Hattiesburg, MS. For more information visit this website: <http://www.mississippisportsmenshow.com/>.

♥ **2014 Garden & Patio Shows.**

Spring is just around the corner and what a better time to get ready for it - under one location - at one of the most anticipated events of the Spring! Educational gardening seminars, experts in gardening products, services, outdoor living needs, yard art...you name it, we have it, we know about it, and by the end of the show...so will YOU! Calling all "gardening enthusiasts - come "grow" with us! Don't miss this all inspiring, beautiful show! *Hosted by the MS Nursery & Landscape Association!*

- Dates & Location:
  - Gulf Coast Garden & Patio Show - March 7 -9, 2014
  - Jackson Garden & Patio Show - March 14 - 16, 2014
- Admission Price (Both Shows)
  - \$6.00 Adults; Children 12 & Under Free; Free Parking
- For more information, visit our website at <http://www.mfc.ms.gov/calendar.php>.



*Did You Know?*

- ♥ Unlike the conifers or softwood firs, spruce and pines, hardwood trees have evolved into a broad array of common species. The most common species in North America are oaks, maple, hickory, birch, beech and cherry.
- ♥ A conifer is a tree belonging to the cone bearing order *Coniferales*. These trees have needles or scale-like leaves and are very different. The three most common species in North America are pine, fir and spruce trees. Conifers are among the smallest, largest and oldest living woody plants known. There are 200 conifer species in North America.



# Green Space... Lasting Effect

**GREEN SPACES HAVE LASTING POSITIVE EFFECT ON WELL-BEING.** *By Mark Kinver  
Environment reporter, BBC News*

Living in an urban area with green spaces has a long-lasting positive impact on people's mental well-being, a study has suggested.

UK researchers found moving to a green space had a sustained positive effect, unlike pay rises or promotions, which only provided a short-term boost.

The authors said the results indicated that access to good quality urban parks was beneficial to public health.

The findings appear in the journal *Environmental Science and Technology*.

## Green park

Co-author Mathew White, from the European Centre for Environment and Human Health at the University of Exeter, UK, explained the study built on the findings of a study that showed people living in greener urban areas were displaying fewer signs of depression or anxiety.

As cities grew, parks were areas set aside to preserve a sense of nature in urban landscapes.

"But we did not know the time trajectory," he told BBC News.

"There could have been a number of reasons, for example people do all sorts of things to make them happier: they strive for promotion at work, pay rises, they even get married.

"But the trouble with all those things is that within six months to a year, they are back to their original baseline levels of well-being. So these things are not sustainable; they do not make us happy in the long-term.

"We found that within a group of lottery winners who had won more than £500,000 that the positive effect was def-

initely there but after six months to a year, they were back to the baseline."

Dr White said his team wanted to see whether living in greener urban areas had a lasting positive effect on people's sense of well-being or whether the effect also disappeared after a period of time.



To do this, the team used data from the British Household Panel Survey (now known as the Understanding Society survey), which began in 1991, and compiled by the University of Essex.

"It is a massive, representative sample of the UK population (currently about 40,000 households a year) and asks a load of questions, such as income, marital status etc," said Dr White.

"But it also includes something called the General Health Questionnaire, which is used by clinicians and doctors to diagnose depression and anxiety disorders."

## Lasting effects

Explaining what the data revealed, he said: "What you see is that even after three years, mental health is still better which is unlike many of the other things that we think will make us happy."

Dr White added that the team had submitted an application for funding to carry out further research that would examine marital relationships in different areas and to what extent things like divorce rates and satisfaction levels differed.

"There is evidence that people within an area with green spaces are less stressed and when you are less stressed you make more sensible decisions and you communicate better," he observed.

"I am not going to say it is the magic pill that cures all marriage problems, of course it is not, but it may be the [background factor] that helps tip the balance towards making more sensible decisions and having more adult conversations."

With a growing body of evidence establishing a link between urban green spaces and a positive impact on human well-being, Dr White said there was growing interest among public policy officials.

"But the trouble is who funds it," he said.

"For example, environmental officials will say that if it is good for people's health then surely shouldn't the health service be putting some money in.

"So a lot of people are interested but what we really need at a policy level is to decide where the money is going to come from to help support good quality local green spaces."



# Safety First . . .

## Night Driving

Traffic death rates are three times (62%) greater at night than during the day, according to the National Safety Council. Yet many of us are unaware of night driving's special hazards or don't know effective ways to deal with them.

Why is night driving so dangerous? One obvious answer is darkness. Ninety percent of a driver's reaction depends on vision, and vision is severely limited at night. Depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision are compromised after sundown.

Older drivers have even greater difficulties seeing at night. A 50-year-old driver may need twice as much light to see as well as a 30-year old.

Another factor adding danger to night driving is fatigue. Drowsiness makes driving more difficult by dulling concentration and slowing reaction time.

Alcohol is a leading factor in fatal traffic crashes, playing a part in about half of all motor vehicle-related deaths. That makes weekend nights more dangerous. More fatal crashes take place on weekend nights than at any other time in the week.

Fortunately, you can take several effective measures to minimize these after-dark dangers by preparing your car and following special guidelines while you drive.

The National Safety Council recommends these steps:

- Prepare your car for night driving. Keep headlights, tail lights, signal lights and windows (inside and out) clean.
- Have your headlights properly aimed. Mis-aimed headlights blind

other drivers and reduce your ability to see the road.

- Don't drink and drive. Not only does alcohol severely impair your driving ability, it also acts as a depressant. Just one drink can induce fatigue.
- Avoid smoking when you drive. Smoke's nicotine and carbon monoxide hamper night vision.
- If there is any doubt, turn your headlights on. Lights will not help you see better in early twilight, but they'll make it easier for other drivers to see you. Being seen is as important as seeing.
- Reduce your speed and increase your following distances. It is more difficult to judge other vehicle's speeds and distances at night.
- Don't overdrive your headlights. You should be able to stop inside the illuminated area. If you're not, you are creating a blind crash area in front of your vehicle.
- When following another vehicle, keep your headlights on low beams so you don't blind the driver ahead of you.
- If an oncoming vehicle doesn't lower beams from high to low, avoid glare by watching the right edge of the road and using it as a steering guide.
- Make frequent stops for light snacks and exercise. If you're too tired to drive, stop and get rest.
- If you have car trouble, pull off the road as far as possible. Warn approaching traffic at once by setting up reflecting triangles near your vehicle and 300 feet behind it. Turn on flashers and the dome light. Stay off the roadway and get passengers away from the area.

Observe night driving safety as soon as the sun goes down. Twilight is one of the most difficult times to drive, because

your eyes are constantly changing to adapt to the growing darkness.

*Reprinted with permission from the National Safety Council*

### Night Driving Statistics

- In the year reported, there were about 50,000 motor vehicle deaths in the U.S. 19,000 people died in the daylight. 31,000 died in the dark. Of the 31,000 night fatalities, 19,000 died in rural areas; 12,000 died in urban areas.
- About half of all night traffic deaths are caused by poor visibility. The best way to compensate for this problem is to slow down.
- Studies show that the other five major causes of night traffic fatalities are
  - defective rear lights,
  - defective headlights,
  - fog, driver fatigue, and
  - intoxication.
- Most at risk on nighttime streets and roads in all motor-vehicle fatalities are those in the 15-24 age group and the 75-and-over age group. They make up 33% of all victims, and their death rate is twice the average of all groups. Half of those killed in a "collision with a fixed object" were in the 15-24 age group.
- Night drivers are most at risk in July and August, late Friday night and early Saturday morning, with 1 a.m. being the most deadly hour.

Be sure to take extra precaution when planning to drive at night. Your life and the life of your family and friends are at risk.

*First Time, Every Time*